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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

August 8, 2005

Matthew Hogan  
Acting Director  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1849 C St., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Acting Director Hogan:

I want to begin by complementing you on the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's (Service) decision to abandon the "preferred alternative" for the Comprehensive Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. This plan is seriously flawed and desperately in need of improvement.

Frankly, I am not surprised the listening sessions on the plan resulted in the need for the Service to go back to the drawing board. The Mississippi River is one of our nation's premier recreational destinations and economic engines. It is a shining example of a successful multiple-use management strategy at work. Yet, the proposal developed by the Service pushes people away from this premier destination.

Each year, hundreds of thousands of people take advantage of the river's recreational splendor while working closely to ensure the wildlife species remain abundant and plentiful. Unfortunately, the Service's proposal restricts hunting, restricts fishing, restricts camping and restricts motorboat access - all while increasing fees. This is simply unacceptable.

While significantly restricting access to the refuge is sure to have an untold social impact, the economic impact will also be great. Many businesses will be forced to downsize or go out of business. Jobs will be lost. This simply cannot be allowed to happen.

The Service should select Alternative A as its new "preferred alternative." Hunting and fishing on the river have never been better and that water quality continues to improve. I simply do not see the need to move away from the current and successful management plan.

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Finally, I believe that those who use the river and whose livelihood depends on the river should have greatest voice in the management of the river. As you can imagine, in my capacity as an elected official, I have heard from a great number of folks in Wisconsin who were greatly concerned with restrictions in the current alternative. In fact, thousands have signed petitions in support of Alternative A.

I certainly hope the Service will listen closely to the comments it received during the listening session and from others who live and work along the river to make the necessary changes. I would expect a similarly strong response should the new "preferred alternative" include any of the restrictions contained in the original "preferred alternative."

I appreciate you taking the time to consider my thoughts. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Best Regards,



Mark Green  
Member of Congress

MAG:dr